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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: DECEMBER 17, 2009

Summary: Coverage of the Supreme Court's verdict declaring the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) "null and void" dominated front pages Thursday morning. All newspapers highlighted Admiral Mullen's meetings with senior Pakistani civilian and military officials, along with his visit to Swat valley. His remarks that "the top leadership of Al Qaeda and Taliban is in Pakistan" received prominent display; but several papers opted to underline Pakistan's messages to the U.S. regarding the Afghan strategy. Prime Minister Gilani's remarks that "drone attacks in Balochistan would be highly counterproductive and would affect Pakistan's efforts to confront the challenge of terrorism," were widely covered. "The Nation" reported that Pakistan Army Chief General Kayani rejected U.S. demands for new military operation against Afghan militants allegedly in Pakistan. All major dailies published a Washington Post story which claimed that President Zardari sent a letter to President Obama in response to his appeal for an expansion of military offensive in the tribal areas, maintaining that Pakistan's counterinsurgency efforts will be based on its own timeline and operational needs. Media also covered General Petraeus's comments to Fox News that the "U.S. war (is) a success, even if Usama has not been captured". Reports that the U.S. House of Representatives passed a massive military spending bill rounded out coverage. Several papers reported that Pakistan has refused visas to as many as 137 U.S. nationals because of incorrect information provided on the visa applications. The Nation continued to publish fictitious stories, front-paging a report quoting "reliable sources" that Pakistan is considering to swap five detained Americans for former Bank of Punjab president Hameesh Khan as well as Dr. Aafia Siddiqi. End Summary.

TOP STORIES

News Story: Supreme Court Declares NRO Null And Void "Dawn" (12/17)

"In what has been billed as a verdict that may change the course of country's political history, the Supreme Court on Wednesday declared the controversial National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) as never to have existed and against the Constitution by reviving all cases and reversing acquittals of its beneficiaries, thus putting the PPP parliamentarians and cabinet members and President Asif Zardari in a quandary. In a late-night short order that has no parallel in country's judicial history, the 17-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry, ordered the federal government to take immediate steps to seek revival of the original requests or claims for mutual legal assistance to pursue money laundering cases pending in foreign countries, including Switzerland." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Drone Attacks To Spoil Govt. Efforts, Gilani Tells Mullen "The News," "Daily Times" (12/17)

"Prime Minister Gilani on Wednesday made it clear to the United States that drone attacks in Balochistan would be highly counterproductive and would spoil Pakistan's efforts to confront the challenge of terrorism. The Prime Minister was talking to U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen, who called on him at the PM House here. During the meeting, Chief of the Army Staff General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani assisted the prime minister. American Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Paterson was also present on the occasion."

News Story: Qaeda, Taliban Leaders In Pakistan: Mullen "Daily Times" (12/17)

"The top leadership of Al Qaeda and Taliban is in Pakistan and planning to kill 'as many Americans as they have' in the past, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen said on Wednesday. 'The indication that I have is that they (Al Qaeda and Afghan Taliban leadership) are here [Pakistan] and are actually protected by others, particularly, by the [local] Taliban. This is our information, we operate under it and it's the focus of our strategy,' he said in an interview at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad."

News Story: Mullen, Kayani Visit Swat "Daily Times," "The News" (12/17)

"U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Michael Mullen visited Swat on Wednesday with Army Chief General Ashfaq Kayani. Mullen praised the Pakistan Army's efforts to rid the area of the Taliban. Sources said the two Chiefs visited Kalam. The visit to Swat is the first by any top American military official."

News Story: Zardari Resists U.S. Pressure To Expand FATA Operations "Dawn," "The News," "The Nation" (12/17)

"In a letter to Barack Obama, President Asif Ali Zardari has turned down the U.S. request for expanding Pakistani military operations in Fata, according to The Washington Post. Mr. Zardari also urged the U.S. President to speed up American military assistance to Pakistan and to intervene more forcefully with India for resolving bilateral disputes."

News Story: U.S. Accuses Pak Of Harassing Diplomats "The Nation" (12/17)

"American officials in Islamabad have accused parts of the Pakistani military and intelligence services of harassing U.S. diplomat, fraying relations when the Obama administration is demanding more help to fight the Taliban and Al Qaeda, according to The New York Times. The campaign includes the refusal to extend or approve visas for more than 100 American officials and the frequent searches of American diplomatic vehicles in major cities, an American official briefed on the cases, was cited as saying by the newspaper."

News Story: Pakistan Refusing Visas To U.S. Officials "Daily Times" (12/17)

"The Government of Pakistan has stopped issuing visas to the United States citizens including U.S. army officials and diplomats, a senior U.S. diplomat said on Wednesday.... The U.S. diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe sensitive interaction between the two countries, said that the visa clampdown seems to be a reaction to widespread anti-American sentiments."

News Story: Pakistan Refuses Visa To 137 U.S. Nationals "The Nation" (12/17)

"Pakistan has refused visas to as many as 137 U.S. citizens because of incorrect information that the applicants provided to authorities through Pakistan Embassy in Washington, well placed sources told 'The Nation' on Wednesday."

News Story: PML-N To Requisition NA Session; Foreigners' Dubious Activities "The Nation" (12/17)

"The Opposition would expose the dangers looming large over the country's sovereignty mainly due to the devious activities of some foreign diplomatic missions especially the U.S., in a special session of the National assembly to be requisitioned shortly after the month of Muharram."

TERRORISM/MILITARY ISSUES

News Story: U.S. War A Success, Even If Bin Laden Still At Large
"The News," "Daily Times" (12/17)

"U.S. Commander General David Petraeus on Wednesday called Washington's fight against terrorism in Afghanistan 'successful,' even if al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden has not been captured, said Petraeus, Chief of US Central Command, speaking from Kabul to Fox News channel television."

News Story: Two Killed As U.S. Drone Fired Two Missiles In Dattakhel: Officials "The Nation" (12/17)

"At least two people were killed on Thursday (today) when a missile from an unmanned U.S. aircraft slammed into a suspected militant hideout in northwest tribal belt, security officials said. The attack struck a house in Dattakhel village, some 30 kilometers (18 miles) west of Miranshah, the main town of the restive North Waziristan tribal district bordering Afghanistan."

News Story: 27 Militants Killed In Kurram "Dawn" (12/17)

"Security forces, backed by military planes and helicopter gunships, killed 27 terrorists and arrested 18 others in the Taliban stronghold of Dogar in Kurram region on Wednesday. Official sources said that the forces also seized a large cache of weapons." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: 7 Die As Copters Pound Hideouts "Dawn" (12/17)

"Seven militants were killed when helicopter gunships attacked their hideouts in remote Tirah valley of Khyber Agency on Wednesday, sources said. Military sources said that the house of an important commander of the Namdar group had been destroyed." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Govt. Mulls Detainees' Swap With U.S. "The Nation" (12/17)

"Pakistan is considering to swap five Americans arrested from Sargodha last week with former Bank of Punjab President Hameesh Khan as well as Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, 'The Nation' reliably learned on Wednesday. According to sources, the government is actively finalizing these proposals to take up with the U.S. through the diplomatic channels."

News Story: JI Stages Rallies "Dawn" (12/17)

"Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) activists staged two 'Go America Go' rallies on Wednesday, one in Toba Tek Singh and the other in Kamalia. Speaking on the occasion, JI leaders Dr Maqbool, Dr Zahid Sattar and Soofi Rashid condemned the rulers for allegedly playing a role of stooges of America."

POLITICAL ISSUES

News Story: PM Pledges Enforcement In Letter And Spirit "The News" (12/17)

"Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani will strictly adhere to the verdict of the Supreme Court in the case against the obnoxious National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) and action would be taken by the prime minister after careful consideration of the pros and cons of the situation as he feels the judgment has enhanced his responsibilities. He is likely to seek summary explanation with regard to the position of the Ministers and Ministers of State who were the beneficiaries of the NRO. The action would be taken in the light of their explanation."

News Story: President Enjoys Immunity: Babar; Says Govt. Will Respect SC Verdict "The News" (12/17)

"The Presidency on Wednesday announced that the government accepts and respects the verdict of the Supreme Court. "The president enjoys the immunity under Article 248(2) of the Constitution," said Presidential spokesman Farhatullah Babar while talking to newsmen at the Supreme Court after the judgment of the apex court on the NRO."

News Story: Zardari Becomes An Accused President "The News" (12/17)

"The Supreme Court's landmark short order on the National Reconciliation Ordinance, (NRO) although not Asif Ali Zardari-specific, has reduced him into an accused president, whose assets stand frozen and all corruption cases involving \$1.7 billion revived to haunt him as the situation was before October 2007."

News Story: Foreign Cases Against Zardari Stand Revived "The News" (12/17)

"Top constitutional experts of the country in their interviews with 'The News' interpreted that Wednesday's Supreme Court judgment leaves no constitutional immunity from criminal prosecution to President Asif Ali Zardari in foreign countries in the light of Article 248 of the Constitution."

News Story: A Wave Of Jubilation Sweeps The Country "The News" (12/17)

"The historical Supreme Court judgment against the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) sent a wave of jubilation across the country on Wednesday. People welcomed the SC verdict saying the Court through its landmark decision once again proved that the judiciary was independent. They said the decision strengthens superiority of the judiciary and a new era of dispensation of justice will emerge in the country."

News Story: A landmark Judgment "Dawn" (12/17)

"Lawyers have called the decision of Supreme Court on the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) a landmark judgment in the judicial history of Pakistan and the first step toward a corruption-free country. Former Supreme Court Bar Association president Hamid Khan says the judgment is the outcome of lawyers' movement which made the judiciary an independent institution." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Opposition Hails Decision On NRO "Dawn" (12/17)

"Opposition leaders have welcomed the Supreme Court decision on striking down the National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) and demand resignation of all public offices holders who benefited from the ordinance." (Story also covered in all newspapers)

News Story: Cabinet Curtails Foreign Tours Of President, PM "The News" (12/17)

"The Federal Cabinet on Wednesday approved a number of austerity measures, including curtailing the foreign visits of the President, the Prime Minister and Federal Ministers besides abolishing some ministries and reducing the strength of the Cabinet through constitutional amendments. The Cabinet met in Islamabad under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani."

ECONOMY/BUSINESS

News Story: World Powers Must Bolster Economic Support For Pak: Holbrooke "The Nation" (12/17)

"The world economic powers must lend economic support to Pakistan as robustly as they are doing for Afghanistan to help Islamabad step up socio-economic development of its people, U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke said. The Obama Administration's special representative for the region acknowledged the fact that Pakistan currently is not receiving enough economic assistance. Speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations, Holbrooke said Washington has an 'undiminished' commitment to Pakistan's progress but stressed expansion in economic support for the key South Asian anti-terrorism partner must be an international effort."

News Story: U.S. Outlines Conditions For Aid To Pakistan "Daily Times" (12/17)

"The Obama administration sought to reassure U.S. lawmakers this week it would demand 'maximum accountability' from Pakistan for \$7.5 billion in aid and that it had safeguards to ensure funds did not reach extremists. In a report sent by the State Department to congressional committees late on Monday, the administration outlined its priorities for the aid, including water, agriculture and electricity projects, and laid out a strategy to prevent corruption and misuse of the money."

News Story: FDI Falls 52.2 Per Cent "The Nation" (12/17)

"The inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) into Pakistan declined by 52.2 per cent during the first five months of current fiscal year 2009-10. Pakistan received a total of 774.0 million dollars worth foreign direct investment during July-November FY10 against 1.620 billion dollars in the corresponding period of the last fiscal year amid slowdown in the global economic recovery and political and security concerns, the SBP reported on Wednesday."

News Story: Country To Face 1,000-1,400MW Shortage From 27th "The News" (12/17)

"The country is once again going to face the scourge of power load-shedding from December 26, as it faces shortage of 1,000 to 1,400 MW of electricity. The reasons are canals' closure and non-availability of natural gas, Managing Director of Pakistan Electric Power Company Tahir Basharat Cheema told 'The News.'"

EDITORIALS/OPINIONS

Editorial: Judgment Day, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/17)

"The judgment of the Supreme Court predictably provoked a veritable blizzard of media activity.... The judgment may have been late but it is a worthy one.... The judgment is truly a landmark. The SC has rid the nation of an ignominy that had tried its soul for long.... We the people hold our heads a little higher today - and anticipate a rolling of a few of those heads for whom it is long overdue."

Editorial: U.S. Threat To Nukes, an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/17)

"U.S. Vice President Biden has finally made it clear that Pakistan's nuclear weapons should be the prime focus of U.S. policy.... For Pakistan the threat from the U.S. is now abundantly clear. It lies in the U.S. attempting to take out our nuclear capability one way or another.... If we thought our main security threat was only from extremist militancy, we need to think again."

Editorial: Matching Response On Quetta Shura, an editorial in the country's premier business newspaper, "Business Recorder" (cir. 25,000) (12/17)

"Of course, there is no hint that the United States would bring Balochistan under its drone attacks, but there is no pledge either that this will not happen in the future.... Now that a number of U.S. officials are expected to visit here, it would be in the fitness of things that they succeed in firming up a common perception, particularly on the so-called Quetta Shura.... More so, for the reason that Pakistan has yet to receive what can be called credible evidence on the presence of the Quetta Shura on its soil. In the absence of such an evidence a military operation, ground or aerial, against the entity would not be acceptable to the people of Pakistan. But if the Americans come up with such evidence there should be no hesitation on the part of Pakistan to move quickly. It is in our national interest that its soil doesn't become a safe haven for terrorism."

Editorial: Unresolved Inconsistencies, an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (12/17)

"The U.S. and Pakistan are both impaled on the horns of their respective dilemmas. The U.S. cannot hope for progress in the struggle in Afghanistan, let alone 'victory,' without taking out the rear base areas of the insurgents inside Pakistan. To do so risks alienating its uneasy ally, not to act risks defeat in Afghanistan in the long run. Pakistan, on the other hand, seems wedded so far to militarily wiping out any threat from local Taliban while preserving its covert alliance with the Afghan Taliban to be able, at a minimum, to have its slice of the cake in a post-U.S. withdrawal Afghanistan. The two positions are so far irreconcilable, and if they remain unresolved, could cause a breakdown in the two allies' relations and cooperation in the war on terror."

Editorial: Pakistan Should Decline Providing Logistic Service To The U.S., an editorial in the second-largest, nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (12/17)

"The government has revealed to the Senate Committee on Communications that the country's roads have suffered damage worth more than Rs 5 billion due to the U.S. and NATO vehicles transporting supplies to Afghanistan. The government has sent a notice to the U.S. in this regard [the same amount in compensation].... Public circles feel that the compensation demanded from the U.S. is a pittance, and it should be reviewed. Reports from experts must also be sought in this regard and the U.S. must be asked to seek logistic help from the Soviet [CAS] states. Pakistan should slowly extricate itself from such jobs, thereby reducing the scope of U.S. interference."

Editorial: Heaven And Hell, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/17)

"The key to understanding what has been happening lies in the kind of lives countless people are condemned to live. Desperate parents hand over sons to militant groups; sometimes in exchange for money. The boys themselves are willing to give up all in the hope of entering the magical land conjured up for them by their captors. The long-term answer to this scourge lies in tackling the crippling poverty which holds people in a trap. Illiteracy and despair walk alongside poverty. Policies to alter this reality must be put in place now. But we also need short-term action, which should include creating awareness about how recruiters act and what means they use to persuade their victims to give up their lives. This could prevent others walking along the path that promises heaven but takes many straight to hell."

Editorial: Terrorism in South Punjab: Is It Prelude To New Demands?, an editorial in the leading mass circulation populist, often sensational Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (12/17)

"The Tuesday's suicide attack in Dera Ghazi Khan invites the immediate attention of our government to examine this tragic incident from different angles. There is a possibility that this attack may provide a justification to the western powers to demand the Pakistani government to expand drone attacks to south Punjab. Is the recent surge in the terrorist attack merely a reaction to the military operation in tribal areas, or a part of a broad-based conspiracy against Pakistan? Which powers are pulling the strings from behind the terrorists? Why the frequency and intensity of the suicide attacks are gaining momentum despite the full-fledged military operation, and the popular resistance in the country? We think that the answers to these questions are the prerequisite to make the anti-terrorism policies a success."

Editorial: Need To Mull Over Different Aspects Of D. G. Khan Attack, an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (12/17)

"It is not important to consider that who was the real perpetrator of the D. G. Khan attack, the Taliban or any other power. The real question, which emerged out of this inferno, is that whether the government would order military operation in south Punjab. Our rulers must keep in mind that the foreign powers will leave no stone unturned to create another quagmire for armed forces in this area. We hope that saner minds would prevail and the government would not take any hasty decision which could prove disastrous for the future of Pakistan."

Editorial: Suicide Bombing In D. G. Khan, an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (12/17)

"After a brief calm, the suicide attack in Dera Ghazi Khan has once again plunged the entire nation into a state of panic and quandary. At present, Pakistan is passing through the most critical period of its history. What a pity that innocent people are being killed cold-blooded not only by the U.S. drones, but also in the suicide bombings being launched in response to these American attacks. The government must consider all aspects of the D. G. Khan attack, especially the possibility of an attempt to kill PML-N leader Sardar Zulfiqar Khosa who has repeatedly denied the presence of the Taliban in south Punjab."

Editorial: Terror in D. G. Khan, an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/17)

"The wave of terror we have seen now for many weeks continues unabated.... The killers have shown they remain capable of striking with great force and deadly intent. It is worth considering what this means. We hear the operation in Waziristan is almost over, but this has not translated into any check on the havoc wreaked by the militants. The rising sense of the government being helpless in the face of terrorism does not augur well for us as citizens."

Editorial: Terrorism In Dera Ghazi Khan, an editorial in the liberal Urdu daily "Express" (circ. 25, 000) (12/17)

"The government and security institutions must review the terrorist incident in Dera Ghazi Khan from every angle. The allegation must also be investigated as to why there were insufficient security arrangements despite reports [that DG Khan might be targeted]. Who was responsible for this laziness despite credible information on terrorists' arrival? And how did terrorists succeed in taking 1000kg explosive to the target? The most tragic part of the DG Khan incident is lack of proper security arrangements."

Editorial: D.G. Khan: Expanding Scope Of Terrorist Acts, an editorial in independent Urdu daily "Din" (circ. 5000) (12/17)

"The Dera Ghazi Khan bomb blast could be investigated from several angles. The first angle is that some powers are trying to prove that southern Punjab is a Taliban hub. Some extremist groups are running their training camps here. These people have turned their houses and centers into fortresses. The attack on Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore and the second attack on FIA building is their work.... Whatever the case might be, Dera Ghazi Khan has emerged as a new target after this attack.... At the local level, however, this attack is also being viewed as an act to damage the Khosa family [whose market was targeted in the attack]."

Opinion: A Victory Of Greed And Hypocrisy, an op-ed by Mohammad Jamil in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (12/17)

"Indian and U.S. leadership often express concerns that Pakistan's nuclear assets are not safe, and in case militants succeed they will have control of the nukes. In May 2009, even President Barack Obama went to the extent of saying that the U.S. will take all the steps to secure Pakistan's nuclear assets and nukes. As a matter of fact they know full well that nuclear devices are not stacked in the shelves of the warehouses that anybody can pick these up. There is a multi-layered system and even the U.S. would not know the exact location of Pakistan's nuclear devices and delivery system. Instead of casting aspersions and insinuations they should acknowledge that Pakistan is a responsible state, but could not be bullied, as it is a nuclear state in its own right."

Opinion: Straight Talk To The U.S., an op-ed by Syed Talat Hussain in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (12/17)

"The decision making process, starting from target selection to the pushing of the button, cannot be done without Pakistan's permission. The principle of cooperation being: 'We are one, but on our

territory we are the only one.'... Even the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan is hyperactive, creating an impression of imperial duties being performed imperiously. However, like all Embassies, they are carrying out their administration's orders. This policy outlook, which makes Pakistan look like an outpost of the U.S. war, must change. As the U.S. enters the decisive phase of starting the Obama brand of military operations in Afghanistan, it will learn new things on the field. In Pakistan, it must learn to treat a crucial ally with dignity and respect."

Opinion: A Tight Balloon In Hot Air , an op-ed by Samson Simon Sharaf in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/17)

"The Government of Pakistan has to appreciate the dangers to its integrity and security arising out of the third surge. The opportunities have to be recognized, even if it be at the cost of short term tactical disadvantage. The bottom line is that after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, Pakistan must emerge as a responsible nuclear power with no scope for private armies led by criminals, thugs and militants. This means bracing for a bloody winter in the urban areas."

Opinion: Evil Designs Of The United States, an op-ed by Azam Khalil in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (12/17)

"The Americans have recently raised the stakes and it has been seen that several American vehicles have been intercepted by the law enforcement agencies in Pakistan who were found to be on the wrong side of the law. These incidents have become so frequent that they have now attracted the attention of common Pakistani citizens who were vociferously questioning the attitude of not only the federal government but also the provincial governments where such happenings have been reported.... While this episode was unfolding in Lahore, the American ambassador in Islamabad made a personal appeal to President Asif Ali Zardari for the extradition of the five American young men who were apprehended in Sargodha on serious charges.... The Americans must be made to understand that they are not above the law in this country and that in case they violate any law they should also be ready to receive the punishment that will be staring at them in future."

Opinion: An Unequal Partnership?, an op-ed by Ikram Sehgal in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (12/17)

"The U.S. seems endlessly to find fault with Pakistan despite our many more sacrifices, suffering military and civilian casualties at

more than a 10:1 ratio. Does it serve U.S. interests to threaten Pakistan time and again unless it 'does more'? We can never be equals and Pakistan has more to lose because it cannot walk away from the region as the U.S. has done before. Pakistan's greater stake evens the imbalance of this relationship. For the new Obama Doctrine to succeed the U.S. must understand that the roads to peace literally give through Peshawar and Quetta.... The initiatives enunciated in the Obama Doctrine incorrectly put in order of priority the most important, 'an effective partnership with Pakistan,' after the 'military surge' and the 'civilian surge.' The U.S. recognizes that Pakistan is central to any lasting solution in Afghanistan, yet there remains a yawning gap (and reluctance) to translate rhetoric into reality. Failure to rectify this major anomaly will render gains made in Afghanistan reversible, as has happened in the past in this unfortunate country."

Opinion: Some Worrying Developments, an op-ed by Tariq Fatemi in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (12/17)

"If the Americans are supposed to start withdrawing their troops in less than two years, would Pakistan not be justified in hedging its bets? After all, if we are to live next to a Taliban-dominated Afghanistan, why annoy them? Even more worrying is the absence of evidence of U.S. willingness to use its influence to bring India back to the negotiating table, or even of asking it to end its alleged interference in Fata and Balochistan. In such a scenario,

would Pakistan not be justified in wondering why it should 'play ball' with the U.S.?"

Opinion: New Afghan Policy, an op-ed by Bilal Zubair in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (12/17)

"The U.S. has not had any real success in Afghanistan. To provide economic development, literacy, rooting out poppy cultivation, peace and security to masses and dismantling the terrorist networks were some responsibilities that the U.S. and its allied forces were to fulfill. Most of the Afghans still consider the U.S. and allied troops as occupants. The U.S. and its allied forces should not pull out from Afghanistan in haste. Such an approach would make the Afghan affairs messy because of the limitations of the present Afghan regime. If the West seriously believes that Pakistan is critical for peace in Afghanistan, then Pakistani leadership should be consulted and taken into confidence before taking important decisions affecting Afghanistan. The future of Pak-U.S. relations depends upon the outcome of the new U.S. strategy in Afghanistan."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Patterson